

# THEOSOPHIC THEMES

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*Articles by William Q. Judge*

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### THREE GREAT IDEAS

**A**MONG many ideas brought forward through the theosophical movement there are three which should never be lost sight of. Not speech, but thought, really rules the world; so, if these three ideas are good let them be rescued again and again from oblivion.

*The first idea* is, that there is a great Cause—in the sense of an enterprise—called the Cause of Sublime Perfection and Human Brotherhood. This rests upon the essential unity of the whole human family, and is a possibility because sublimity in perfectness and actual realization of brotherhood on every plane of being are one and the same, thing. All efforts by Rosicrucian, Mystic, Mason and Initiate are efforts toward the convocation in the hearts and minds of men of the Order of sublime Perfection.

*The second idea* is, that man is a being who may be raised up to perfection, to the stature of the Godhead, because he himself is God incarnate. This noble doctrine was in the mind of Jesus, no doubt, when he said that we must be perfect even as is the father in heaven. This is the idea of human perfectibility. It will destroy the awful theory of inherent original sin which has held and ground down the western Christian nations for centuries.

*The third idea* is the illustration, the proof, the high result of the others. It is, that the Masters—those who have reached up to what perfection this period of evolution and this solar system will allow—are living, veritable facts, and not abstractions cold and distant. They are, as our old H. P. B. so often said, *living men*. And she said, too, that a shadow of woe would come to those who should say they were not living facts, who should assert that “the Masters descend not to

this plane of ours.” The Masters as living facts and high ideals will fill the soul with hope, will themselves help all who wish to raise the human race.

Let us not forget these three great ideas.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

*Irish Theosophist*, February, 1895

## PLAIN THEOSOPHICAL TRACES

**I**N the *Key to Theosophy* the author says that at the last quarter of each century there is always a distinct movement partaking of the nature of the present Theosophical one, and this opinion is held by many Theosophists. Can these efforts be traced? Did any people call themselves by the name “Theosophist” one hundred years ago? Is it necessary that all such movements should have been called in the past “Theosophical”? And if the claim that such movements are started by the Adepts be true, is the present Society the only body with which those beings work?

Taking up the last question first, we may turn to H.P.B. for authority. She often said that while the T. S. movement of today was distinctly under the care of the Adepts, it was not the only one through which effect was sought to be made on the race-thought and ethics, but that in many different ways efforts were constantly put forward. But still, she insisted, the T.S. wears the badge, so to say, of the Eastern and Ancient Schools, and therefore has on it the distinctive mark—or what the Sanskrit calls *lakshana*—of the old and united Lodge of Adepts. Inquiring further of reason and tradition, we find that it would be against both to suppose that one single organization should be the sole channel for the efforts of the Brotherhood. For if that Brotherhood has the knowledge and power and objects attributed to it, then it must use every agency which is in touch with humanity. Nor is it necessary to assume that the distinct efforts made in each century, as contradistinguished from the general current of influence in all directions, should be called Theosophical. The Rosicrucians are often supposed not to have existed at all as a body, but deep students have come to the conclusion that they had an organization.

They were Christian in their phraseology and very deep mystics; and while they spoke of Holy Ghost, Sophia, and the like, they taught Theosophy. They were obliged by the temper of the time to suit themselves to the exigencies of the moment, for it would have been extreme folly to destroy the hope of making any effect by rushing out in opposition then. It is different now, when the air and the thought are free and men are not burned by a corrupt church for their opinions. In one sense the T. S. is the child of the Rosicrucian Society of the past. H.P.B. often said this, and inquiry into their ideas confirms the declaration. The Rosicrucians were Christian in the beginning and descendants afterwards of Christians. Even today it is hinted that in one of the great cities of this new Republic there is a great charity begun and carried on with money which has been given by descendants of the Rosicrucians under inward impulse directed by certain of the Adepts who were members of that body. For blood does count for something in this, that until an Adept has passed up into the seventh degree he is often moved in accordance with old streams of heredity. Or to put it another way, it is often easier for an Adept to influence one who is in his direct physical line than one who by consanguinity as well as psychic heredity is out of the family.

Looking into Germany of 200 years ago, we at once see Jacob Boehme. He was an ignorant shoemaker, but illuminated from within, and was the friend and teacher of many great and learned men. His writings stirred up the Church; they have influence today. His life has many indications in it of help from the Masters of Wisdom. A widespread effect from his writings can be traced through Germany and over to France even after his death. He called himself a Christian, but he was also named "Theosopher," which is precisely Theosophist, for it was only after his day that people began to use "ist" instead of "er." Long after his death the influence lasted. In the sixties many hundreds of his books were deliberately sent all over the world. They were given free to libraries all over the United States, and prepared the way for the work of the Theosophical Society in an appreciable measure, though not wholly.

One hundred years ago there was such a movement in France,

one of the agents of which was Louis Claude, Count St. Martin, whose correspondence was called "Theosophical correspondence." He refers to Boehme, and also to unseen but powerful help which saved him from dangers during the Revolution. His books, *L'Homme de Desir* and others, were widely read, and there are hints of a Society which, however, was compelled to keep itself secret. At the same date almost may be noted the great American Revolution influenced by Thomas Paine, who, though reviled now by ignorant theologians, was publicly thanked by Washington and the first Congress. This republic is a Theosophical effort, for it gives freedom, and fortunately does not declare for any particular religion in the clauses of its Constitution. Hints have been thrown out that the Adepts had some hand in the revolt of the Colonies in 1775. In replying to Mr. Sinnett some years ago, it was written by his Teacher that the Brotherhood dealt with all important human movements, but no one could arraign the body at the bar and demand proofs.

Bro. Buck wrote in 1889: "I have a volume entitled *Theosophical Transactions of the Philadelphian Society*, London, 1697, and another dated 1855, entitled *Introduction to Theosophy or the Science of the Mystery of Christ*, and in 1856 *Theosophical Miscellanies* was issued."

About 1500 years ago Ammonius Saccas made a similar effort which was attended with good results. He had almost the same platform as the T. S., and taught that the aim of Jesus was to show people the truth in all religions and to restore the ancient philosophy to its rightful seat. It is not at all against the theory we are dealing with that the various efforts were not dubbed with the same name. Those who work for the good of humanity, whether they be Adepts or not, do not care for a mere name; it is the substantive effort they seek, and not a vindication in the eyes of men of being first or original

or anything else.

But we have only considered the Western World. All these centuries since A.D.I, and long before that, Theosophical efforts were put forth in Asia, for we must not forget that our theories, as well as those of Ammonius Saccas, are Eastern in their origin. However

much nations may at first ignore the heathen and barbarian, they at last came to discover that it is frequently to the heathen the Christian owes his religion and philosophy. So while Europe was enjoying the delights of rude and savage life, the Easterns were elaborating, refining, and perfecting the philosophy to which we owe so much. We who believe in the Adepts as Brothers of Humanity must suppose that ignorance did not prevail in the Brotherhood as to the effect sure to be one day produced in Europe whenever her attention could be diverted from money-making and won to the great Eastern stores of philosophy. This effect came about through England, Germany, and France. Frenchmen first drew attention to the *Upanishads*, Germans went in for Sanscrit, and England conquered India, so that her metaphysical mines could be examined in peace. We have seen the result of all this more and more every year. There is less ignorant narrow prejudice against the "heathen," the masses are beginning to know that the poor Hindu is not to be despised in the field of thought, and a broader, better feeling has gradually developed. This is much better than the glorification of any Brotherhood, and the Lodge is always aiming at such results, for selfish pride, arrogance, and the love of personal dominion have no place therein. Nor should they in our present Theosophical Society.

WILLIAM BREHON

*Path*, August, 1892

## POINTS OF AGREEMENT IN ALL RELIGIONS<sup>1</sup>

**M**R. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: Let me read you a few verses from some of the ancient Scriptures of the world, from the old Indian books held sacred by the Brahmans of Hindustan.

What room for doubt and what room for sorrow is there in him who knows that all spiritual beings are the same in kind and only differ from each other in degree ?

The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light all this is lighted.

Lead me from the unreal to the real! Lead me from darkness to light! Lead me from death to immortality !

Seeking for refuge, I go to that God who is the light of His own thoughts; He who first creates Brahman and delivers the Vedas to him; who is without parts, without actions, tranquil, without fault, the highest bridge to immortality, like a fire that has consumed its fuel.—*Mundaka Upanishad*.

Such are some of the verses, out of many thousands, which are enshrined in the ancient Hindu Vedas beloved by those we have called "heathen"; those are the sentiments of the people we have called idolaters only.

<sup>1</sup> An address delivered April 17th, 1894, before the parliament of Religions at San Francisco, Calif., by William Q. Judge.

The Midwinter Fair at San Francisco had annexed to it a Religious modeled after the first great one of 1893 at Chicago. Dr. J. D. Buck and William Q. Judge, the latter as General Secretary American Section, were officially invited to address the parliament at one of its sessions as representatives of the Theosophical movement. Time was so short that all speakers were limited to thirty minutes each; for that reason the address is not as full as it would be had more time been granted. But the occasion once more showed the strength of the T.S. movement.

As the representative of the Theosophical movement I am glad to be here, and to be assigned to speak on what are the points of agreement in all religions. I am glad because Theosophy is to be found in all religions and all sciences. We, as members of the Theosophical Society, endorse to the fullest extent those remarks of your chairman in opening, when he said, in effect, that a theology which stayed in one spot without advancing was not a true theology, but that we had advanced to where theology should include a study of man. Such a study must embrace his various religions, both dead and living. And pushing that study into those regions we must conclude that man is greatly his own revealer, has revealed religion to himself, and therefore that all religions must include and contain truth; that no one religion is entitled to a patent or exclusive claim upon truth or revelation, or is the only one that God has given to man, or the only road along which man can walk to salvation. If this be not true, then your Religious Parliament is no Parliament, but only a body of men admiring themselves and their religion. But the very existence of this Parliament proclaims the truth of what I have said, and shows the need which the Theosophical Society has for nineteen years been asserting, of a dutiful, careful, and brotherly inquiry into all the religions of the world, for the purpose of discovering what the central truths are upon which each and every religion rests, and what the original fountain from which they have come. This careful and tolerant inquiry is what we are here for today; for that the Theosophical Society stands and has stood: for toleration, for unity, for the final and irrevocable death of all dogmatism.

But if you say that religion must have been revealed, then surely God did not wait for several millions of years before giving it to those poor beings called men. He did not, surely, wait until He found one poor Semitic tribe to whom He might give it late in the life of the race? Hence He must have given it in the very beginning, and therefore all present religions must arise from one fount.

What are the great religions of the world and from whence have they come? They are Christianity, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Mohammedanism. The first named is the youngest, with all its warring sects, with

Mormonism as an offshoot and with Roman Catholicism boldly claiming sole precedence and truth.

Brahmanism is the old and hoary religion of India, a grown-up, fully-developed system long before either Buddhism or Christianity was born. It extends back to the night of time, and throws the history of religion far, far beyond any place where modern investigators were once willing to place even the beginning of religious thought. Almost the ancient of ancients, it stands in far-off India, holding its holy Vedas in its hands, calmly waiting until the newer West shall find time out of the pursuit of material wealth to examine the treasures it contains.

Buddhism, the religion of Ceylon, of parts of China, of Burmah and Japan and Tibet, comes after its parent Brahmanism. It is historically older than Christianity and contains the same ethics as the latter, the same laws and the same examples, similar saints and identical fables and tales relating to Lord Buddha, the Savior of Men. It embraces today, after some twenty-five hundred years of life, more people than any other religion, for two-thirds of the human family profess it.

Zoroastrianism also fades into the darkness of the past. It teaches ethics such as we know. Much of its ritual and philosophy is not understood, but the law of brotherly love is not absent from it; it teaches justice and truth, charity and faith in God, together with immortality. In these it agrees with all, but it differs from Christianity in not admitting a vicarious salvation, which it says is not possible.

Christianity of today is modern Judaism, but the Christianity of Jesus is something different. He taught forgiveness, Moses taught retaliation, and that is the law today in Christian State and Church. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" is still the recognized rule, but Jesus taught the opposite. He fully agreed with Buddha, who, preaching 500 years before the birth of the Jewish reformer, said we must love one another and forgive our enemies. So modern Christianity is not the religion of Jesus, but Buddhism and the religion of Jesus accord with one another in calling for charity; complete tolerance, perfect non-resistance, absolute self-abnegation.

If we compare Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism together on

the points of ritual, dogmas, and doctrines, we find not only agreement but a marvellous similarity as well, which looks like an imitation on the part of the younger Christianity. Did the more modern copy the ancient? It would seem probable. And some of the early Christian Fathers were in the habit of saying, as we find in their writings, that Christianity brought nothing new into the world, that it existed from all time.

If we turn to ritual, so fully exemplified in the Roman Catholic Church, we find the same practices and even similar clothing and altar arrangements in Buddhism, while many of the prescribed rules for the altar and approaching or leaving it are mentioned very plainly in far more ancient directions governing the Brahman when acting as priest. This similarity was so wonderful in the truthful account given by the Catholic priest Abbe Hue that the alarmed Church first explained that the devil, knowing that Christianity was coming, went ahead and invented the whole thing for the Buddhists by a species of *ante facto* copying, so as to confound innocent Catholics therewith; and then they burned poor Abbe Hue's book. As to stations of the cross, now well known to us, or the rosary, confession, convents, and the like, all these are in the older religion. The rosary was long and anciently used in Japan, where they had over one hundred and seventy-two sorts. And an examination of the mummies of old Egypt reveals rosaries placed with them in the grave, many varieties being used. Some of these I have seen. Could we call up the shades of Babylon's priests, we should doubtless find the same rituals there.

Turning to doctrines, that of salvation by faith is well known in Christianity. It was the cause of a stormy controversy in the time of St. James. But very strangely, perhaps, for many Christians, the doctrine is a very old Brahmanical one. They call it "The Bridge Doctrine," as it is the great Bridge. But with them it does not mean a faith in some particular emanation of God, but God is its aim. God is the means and the way, and God the end of the faith; by complete faith in God, without an intermediary, God will save you. They also have a doctrine of salvation by faith in those great sons of God, Krishna, Rama, and others; complete faith in either of those is for them a way to heaven, a bridge for the crossing over all sins. Even those who were killed by Krishna, in the great war detailed in the *Ramayana*,

went straight to heaven because they looked at him, as the thief on the cross looking at Jesus went to Paradise. In Buddhism is the same doctrine of faith. The twelve great sects of Buddhism in Japan have one called the Sect of the Pure Land. This teaches that Ami-tabha vowed that any one who calls three times on his name would be born into his pure Land of Bliss. He held that some men may be strong enough to prevail against the enemy, but that most men are not, and need some help from another. This help is found in the power of the vow of Amita Buddha, who will help all those who call on his name. The doctrine is a modified form of vicarious atonement, but it does not exclude the salvation by works which the Christian St. James gives out.

Heaven and Hell are also common to Christianity, Buddhism, and Brahmanism. The Brahman calls it Swarga; the Buddhist, Devachan; and we, Heaven. Its opposite is Naraka and Avitchi. But names apart, the descriptions are the same. Indeed, the hells of the Buddhists are very terrible, long in duration and awful in effect. The difference is that the heaven and hell of the Christian are eternal, while the others are not. The others come to an end when the forces which cause them are exhausted. In teaching of more than one heaven there is the same likeness, for St. Paul spoke of more than a single heaven to one of which he was rapt away, and the Buddhist tells of many, each being a grade above or below some other. Brahman and Buddhist agree in saying that when heaven or hell is ended for the soul, it descends again to rebirth. And that was taught by the Jews. They held that the soul was originally pure, but sinned and had to wander through rebirth until purified and fit to return to its source.

In priesthood and priestcraft there is a perfect agreement among all religions, save that the Brahman instead of being ordained a priest is so by birth. Buddha's priesthood began with those who were his friends and disciples. After his death they met in council, and subsequently many councils were held, all being attended by priests. Similar questions arose among them as with the Christians, and identical splits occurred, so that now there are Northern and Southern Buddhism and the twelve sects of Japan. During the life of Buddha the old query of admitting women arose and caused much discussion.

The power of the Brahman and Buddhist priests is considerable, and they demand as great privileges and rights as the Christian ones.

Hence we are bound to conclude that dogmatically and theologically these religions all agree. Christianity stands out, however, as peculiarly intolerant—and in using the word “intolerant” I but quote from some priestly utterances regarding the World’s Fair Parliament—for it claims to be the only true religion that God has seen fit to reveal to man.

The great doctrine of a Savior who is the son of God—God himself—is not an original one with Christianity. It is the same as the extremely ancient one of the Hindus called the doctrine of the Avatar. An Avatar is one who comes down to earth to save man. He is God incarnate. Such was Krishna, and such even the Hindus admit was Buddha, for he is one of the great ten Avatars. The similarity between Krishna or Cristna and Christ has been very often remarked. He came 5,000 years ago to save and benefit man, and his birth was in India, his teaching being Brahmanical. He, like Jesus, was hated by the ruler, Kansa, who desired to destroy him in advance, and who destroyed many sons of families in order to accomplish his end, but failed. Krishna warred with the powers of darkness in his battles with Ravana, whom he finally killed. The belief about him was that he was the incarnation of God. This is in accord with the ancient doctrine that periodically the Great Being assumes the form of man for the preservation of the just, the establishment of virtue and order, and the punishment of the wicked. Millions of men and women read every day of Krishna in the *Ramayana* of Tulsi Das. His praises are sung each day and reiterated at their festivals. Certainly it seems rather narrow and bigoted to assume that but one tribe and one people are favored by the appearance among them of an incarnation in greater measure of God.

Jesus taught a secret doctrine to his disciples. He said to them that he taught the common people in stories of a simple sort, but that the disciples could learn of the mysteries. And in the early age of Christianity that secret teaching was known. In Buddhism is the same thing, for Buddha began with one vehicle or doctrine, proceeded after

to two, and then to a third. He also taught a secret doctrine that doubtless agreed with the Brahmans who had taught him at his father’s court. He gave up the world, and later gave up eternal peace in Nirvana, so that he might save men. In this the story agrees with that of Jesus. And Buddha also resisted Mara, or the Devil, in the wilderness. Jesus teaches that we must be as perfect as the Father, and that the kingdom of heaven is within each. To be perfect as the Father we must be equal with him, and hence here we have the ancient doctrine taught of old by the Brahmans that each man is God and a part of God. This supports the unity of humanity as a spiritual whole, one of the greatest doctrines of the time prior to Christianity, and now also believed in Brahmanism.

That the universe is spiritual in essence, that man is a spirit and immortal, and that man may rise to perfection, are universal doctrines. Even particular doctrines are common to all the religions. Reincarnation is not alone in Hinduism or Buddhism. It was believed by the Jews, and not only believed by Jesus but he also taught it. For he said that John the Baptist was the reincarnation of Elias “who was for to come.” Being a Jew he must have had the doctrines of the Jews, and this was one of them. And in Revelations we find the writer says: “Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the house of my God, and he shall go out no more.”

The words “no more” infer a prior time of going out.

The perfectibility of man destroys the doctrine of original sin, and it was taught by Jesus, as I said. Reincarnation is a necessity for the evolution of this perfection, and through it at last are produced those Saviors of the race of whom Jesus was one. He did not deny similar privileges to others, but said to his disciples that they could do even greater works than he did. So we find these great Sages and Saviors in all religions. There are Moses and Abraham and Solomon, all Sages. And we are bound to accept the Jewish idea that Moses and the rest were the reincarnations of former persons. Moses was in their opinion Abel the son of Adam; and their Messiah was to be a reincarnation of Adam himself who had already come the second time in the person of David. We take the Messiah and trace him up to

David, but refuse, improperly, to accept the remainder of their theory.

Descending to every-day-life doctrines, we find that of Karma, or that we must account and receive for every act. This is the great explainer of human life. It was taught by Jesus and Matthew and St. Paul. The latter explicitly said:

“Brethren, be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap.”

This is Karma of the Brahman and Buddhist, which teaches that each life is the outcome of a former life or lives, and that every man in his rebirths will have to account for every thought and receive measure for the measure given by him before.

In ethics all these religions are the same, and no new ethic is given by any. Jesus was the same as his predecessor, Buddha, and both taught the law of love and forgiveness. A consideration of the religions of the past and today from a Theosophical standpoint will support and confirm ethics. We therefore cannot introduce a new code, but we strive by looking into all religions to find a firm basis, not due to fear, favor, or injustice, for the ethics common to all. This is what Theosophy is for and what it will do. It is the reformer of religion, the unifier of diverse systems, the restorer of justice to our theory of the universe. It is our past, our present, and our future; it is our life, our death, and our immortality.

*Path*, July, 1894

## THINGS COMMON TO CHRISTIANITY AND THEOSOPHY

**T**HAT the Theosophical Society is not opposed to Christianity in either its dogmatic or pure form is easily demonstrated. Our constitution forbids it and the second object of the Society does also. The laws of our body say that there shall be no crusade against any religion, tacitly excepting, of course, the few degraded and bestial religions now in the world; the second object provides for a full and free study of all religions without bias and without hatred or sectarianism. And our history also, offering to view branch societies all over the world composed of Christians, refutes the charge that the Society as such is opposed to Christianity. One instance is enough, that of the well-known Scottish Lodge, which states in its printed Transactions No. IX, “Theosophists who are Christians (and such are the majority of the Scottish Lodge) . . . Therefore Christians who are sincere and who know what Theosophy means must be Theosophists. . . .” If members of the Society have said to the contrary it has been from ignorance and a careless thinking, for on the same ground we should also be opposed to all other religions which have any forms, and both Brahmanism and Buddhism have as much of formalism, as has Christianity. Generally speaking, then, the Society is not and cannot be opposed to Christianity, while it may lead to a denial of some of the men-made theories of that Church.

But that is no more than branches of Christianity have always been doing, nor is it as much a danger to formal Christianity as the new standards of criticism which have crept into the Church.

Nor can it be either that Theosophy as a whole is opposed to

Christianity, inasmuch as Theosophy is and must be the one truth underlying all religions that have ever been among men. A calm and sincere examination of all the world's religions reveals the fact that in respect to ethics, in respect to laws, in respect to precepts or example or effect on daily life, or even in respect to cosmogony and cosmology, the other religious books of the world are the same in most respects as those of the Christians, and that the distinguishing difference between the latter's religion and the others is that it asserts an exclusiveness for itself and a species of doctrinal intolerance not found in the rest.

If we take the words and the example of Jesus as the founder of Christianity, it is at once seen that there is no opposition at all between that form of religion and Theosophy. Indeed, there is the completest agreement. New ethics are not brought forward by Theosophy, nor can they be, as ethics of the right sort must always be the same. In his sermons and sayings are to be found the ethics given out by Buddha and by all other great teachers of all time. These cannot be altered, even though they hold up to weak mortals an ideal that is very difficult to live up to and sometimes impossible to realize in daily life. That these rules of conduct laid down by Jesus are admittedly hard to follow is shown in the behavior of Christian states toward each other and in the declarations of their high prelates that the religion of Jesus cannot be the basis for diplomatic relations nor for the state government. Hence we find that the refuge from all this adopted by the theologian is in the statement that, although other and older religions had moral truth and similar ethics to those of Jesus, the Christian religion is the only one wherein the founder asserted that he was not merely a teacher from God but was also at the same time God himself; that is, that prior to Jesus a great deal of good was taught, but God did not see fit until the time of Jesus to come down among men into incarnation. Necessarily such a declaration would seem to have the effect of breeding intolerance from the high and exclusive nature of the claim made. But an examination of Brahmanism shows that Rama was also God incarnate among men, though there the doctrinedid not arouse the same sum of intolerance among its believers. So it must be true that it is not always a necessary consequence of such

a belief that aggressive and exclusive intolerance will grow up.

The beliefs and teachings of Christianity are not all supportable by the words of Jesus, but his doctrines are at all times in accord with Theosophy. There is certainly a wide difference between the command of Jesus to be poor and to have neither staff nor money and the fact of the possession by the Church of vast sums of money and immense masses of property, and with the drawing of high salaries by prelates, and with the sitting of prelates among the rulers of the earth upon thrones, and in the going to war and the levying of taxes by the Pope and by other religious heads. The gathering of tithes and enforcement of them by law and by imprisonment at the instance of the Protestant clergy are not at all consistent with the words of Jesus. But all of the foregoing inconsistent matters are a part of present Christianity, and if in those respects a difference from or opposition to them should seem to arise from Theosophical teachings we must admit it, but cannot be blamed. If we go back to the times of the early Christians and compare that Christianity with the present form, we see that opposition by Theosophy could hardly be charged, but that the real opposition then would be between that early form of the religion and its present complexion. It has been altered so much that the two are scarcely recognizable as the same. This is so much so that there exists a Christian sect today called "Early Christian."

Every one has at all times a right to object to theological interpretations if they are wrong, or if they distort the original teaching or introduce new notions. In this respect there is a criticism by Theosophy and Theosophists. But thinkers in the world not members of this Society and not leaning to Theosophy do the same thing. Huxley and Tyndall and Darwin and hosts of others took ground that by mere force of truth and fact went against theological views. Galileo also, seeing that the earth was round and moved, said so, but the theologian, thinking that such belief tended to destroy the power of the church and to upset biblical theories, made him recant at the risk of his liberty and life. If the old views of theology were still in force with the state behind them, the triumphs of science would have been few and we might still be imagining the earth to be flat and square and the sun

revolving about it.

Theosophical investigation discloses to the student's view the fact that in all ages there have appeared great teachers of religion and that they all had two methods of instruction. One, or that for the masses of people, was plain and easy to understand; it was of ethics, of this life and of the next, of immortality and love; it always gave out the Golden Rule. Such a teacher was Buddha, and there can be no controversy on the fact that he died centuries before the birth of Jesus. He declared his religion to be that of love. Others did the same. Jesus came and taught ethics and love, with the prominent exception of his prophecy that he came to bring a sword and division as recorded in the Gospels. There is also an incident which accents a great difference between him and Buddha; it is the feast where he drank wine and also made some for others to drink. In regard to this matter, Buddha always taught that all intoxicating liquors were to be rigidly abstained from. The second method was the secret or Esoteric one, and that Jesus also used. We find his disciples asking him why he always used easy parables with the people, and he replied that to the disciples he taught the mysteries, or the more recondite matters of religion. This is the same as prevailed with the older saints. Buddha also had his private teachings to certain disciples. He even made a distinction among his personal followers, making classes in their ranks, to one of which he gave the simple rules, to the other the complex and difficult. So he must have pursued the ancient practise of having two sets of teachings, and this must have been a consequence of his education.

At twelve years of age he came to the temple and disputed with the learned rabbis on matters of the law. Thus he must have known the law; and what that law was and is it is necessary to ask. It was the law of Moses, full of the most technical and abstruse things, and not all to be found in the simple words of the books. The Hebrew books are a vast mine of cypher designedly so constructed, and that should be borne in mind by all students. It ought to be known to Christians, but is not, as they prefer not to go into the mysteries of the Jews. But Jesus knew it. His remark that "not one jot or tittle of the

law would pass" shows this. Most people read this simply as rhetoric, but it is not so. The jots and tittles are a part of the books and go to make up the cypher of the Cabala or the hidden meaning of the law. This is a vast system of itself, and was not invented after the time of Jesus. Each letter is also a number, and thus every word can be and is, according to a well-known rule, turned into some other word or into a number. Thus one name will be a part of a supposed historical story, but when read by the cypher it becomes a number of some cycle or event or a sign of the Zodiac or something else quite different from the mere letters. Thus the name of Adam is composed of three consonants, A, D, and M. These mean by the system of the cypher respectively "Adam, David, and Messiah." The Jews also held that Adam for his first sin would have to and did reincarnate as David and would later come as Messiah. Turning to Revelations we find traces of the same system in the remarks about the numbers of the beast and the man. The Cabala or hidden law is of the highest importance, and as the Christian religion is a Hebraic one it cannot be properly studied or understood without the aid given by the secret teaching. And the Cabala is not dead or unknown, but has many treatises written on it in different languages. By using it, we will find in the Old Testament and in the records of Jesus a complete and singular agreement with Theosophy.

Examine, for instance, the Theosophical teachings that there is a secret or esoteric doctrine, and the doctrine of inability of man to comprehend God. This is the Brahmanical doctrine of the unapproachableness of Parabrahm. In Exodus there is a story which to the profane is absurd, of God telling Moses that he could not see Him. It is in Exodus xxxiii, 20, where God says Moses could see him from behind only. Treat this by the rule of the Cabala and it is plain, but read it on the surface and you have nonsense. In Exodus iii, 14, God say that his name is "I am that I am." This is AHYH ASHR AHYH, which has to be turned into its numerical value, as each letter is also a number. Thus A is 1, H is 5, Y is 10, H is 5. There being two words the same, they add up 42. The second word is A, 1; SH, 300; R, 200 making 501, which t

added to 42 gives 543 as the number of “I am that I am.” Now Moses by the same system makes 345 or the reverse of the other, by which the Cabala shows God meant Moses to know God by his reverse or Moses himself. To some this may appear fanciful, but as it is the method on which these old books are constructed it must be known in order to understand what is not clear and to remove from the Christian books the well-sustained charge of absurdity and sometimes injustice and cruelty shown on their face. So instead of God’s being made ridiculous by attributing to him such a remark as that Moses could only “see his hinder parts,” we perceive that under the words is a deep philosophical tenet corresponding to those of Theosophy, that Parabrahm is not to be known and that Man is a small copy of God through which in some sense or in the reverse we may see God.

For the purposes of this discussion along the line of comparison we will have to place Christianity on one side and put on the other as representing the whole body of Theosophy, so far as revealed, the other various religions of the world, and see what, if anything, is common between them. First we see that Christianity, being the younger, has borrowed its doctrines from other religions. It is now too enlightened an age to say, as the Church did when Abbe Hue brought back his account of Buddhism from Tibet, that either the devil or wicked men invented the old religions so as to confuse and confute the Christian. Evidently, no matter how done, the system of the Christian is mixed Aryan and Jewish. This could not be otherwise, since Jesus was a Jew, and his best disciples and the others who came after like Paul were of the same race and faith. The early Fathers also, living as they did in Eastern lands, got their ideas from what they found about them.

Next a very slight examination will disclose the fact that the ritual of the Christian Church is also borrowed. Taken from all nations and religions, not one part of it is either of this age or of the Western hemisphere. The Brahmans have an extensive and elaborate ritual, and so have the Buddhists. The rosary, long supposed by Catholics to be a thing of their own, has existed in Japan for uncounted years, and much before the West had any civilization the Brahman had his form

of rosary. The Roman Catholic Christian sees the priest ring the bell at a certain part of the Mass, and the old Brahman knows that when he is praying to God he must also ring a bell to be found in every house as well as in the temple. This is very like what Jesus commanded. He said that prayer must be in secret, that is, where no one can hear; the Brahman rings the small bell so that even if ears be near they shall not hear any words but only the sound of the bell. The Christian has images of virgin and child; the same thing is to be found in Egyptian papyri and in carved statues in India made before the Christian came into existence. Indeed, all the ritual and observance of the Christian churches may be found in the mass of other religions with which for the moment we are making a rough comparison.

Turning now to doctrine, we find again complete agreement with the dogmatic part of Christianity in these older religions. Salvation by faith is taught by some priests. That is an old Brahmanical theory, but with the difference that the Brahman one calls for faith in God as the means, the end, and the object of faith. The Christian adds faith in the son of God. A form of Japanese Buddhism said to be due to Amitabha says that one may be saved by complete faith in Amita Buddha, and that even if one prays but three times to Amita he will be saved in accordance with a vow made by that teacher. Immortality of soul has ever been taught by the Brahmans. Their whole system of religion and of cosmogony is founded on the idea of soul and of the spiritual nature of the universe. Jesus and St. Paul taught the unity of spiritual beings—or men—when they said that heaven and the spirit of God were in us, and the doctrine of Unity is one of the oldest and most important of the Brahmanical scheme. The possibility of arriving at perfection by means of religion and science combined so that a man becomes godlike—or the doctrine of Adepts and Mahatmas as found in Theosophy—is common to Buddhism and Brahmanism, and is not contrary to the teachings of Jesus. He said to his disciples that they could if they would do even greater works—or “miracles”—than he did. To do these works one has to have great knowledge and power. The doctrine assumes the perfectibility of humanity and destroys the theory of original sin; but far from being out of concordance with the

religion of Jesus, it is in perfect accord. He directed his followers to be perfect even as the Father in heaven is. They could not come up to that command by any possibility unless man has the power to reach to that high state. The command is the same as is found in the ancient Aryan system. Hence, then, whether we look broadly over the field at mere ritual dogma or at ethics, we find the most complete accord between Theosophy and true Christianity.

But now taking up some important doctrines put forward by members of the Theosophical Society under their right of free investigation and free speech, what do we discover? Novelty, it is true, to the mind of the western man half-taught about his own religion, but nothing that is uncommon to Christianity. Those doctrines may be, for the present, such as Reincarnation or rebirth over and over again for the purpose of discipline and gain, for reward, for punishment, and for enlargement of character: next Karma, or exact justice or compensation for all thoughts and acts. These two are a part of Christianity, and may be found in the Bible.

Reincarnation has been regarded by some Christian ministers as essential to the Christian religion. Dr. Edward Beecher said he saw its necessity, and the Rev. Wm. Alger has recorded his view to the same effect. If a Christian insists upon belief in Jesus, who came only eighteen centuries ago after millenniums had passed and men had died out of the faith by millions, it will be unjust for them to be condemned for a failure to believe a doctrine they never heard of; hence the Christian may well say that under the law of reincarnation, which was upheld by Jesus, all those who never heard of Jesus will be reborn after his coming in A.D. 1, so as to accept the plan of salvation.

In the Gospels we find Jesus referring to this doctrine as if a well established one. When it was broached by the disciples as the possible reason for the punishment by blindness from birth of a man of the time, Jesus did not controvert the doctrine, as he would have done did he see in his wisdom as Son of God that it was pernicious. But at another time he asserted that John the Baptist was the reincarnation of Elias the ancient prophet. This cannot be wiped out of the books, and is a doctrine as firmly fixed in Christianity, though just now out of

favor, as is any other. The paper by Prof. Lands-berg shows you what Origen, one of the greatest of the Christian Fathers, taught on preexistence of souls. This theory naturally suggests reincarnation on this earth, for it is more natural to suppose the soul's wanderings to be here until all that life can give has been gained, rather than that the soul should wander among other planets or simply fall to this abruptly, to be as suddenly raised up to heaven or thrown down to hell.

The next great doctrine is Karma. This is the religion of salvation by works as opposed to faith devoid of works. It is one of the prime doctrines of Jesus. By "by their works ye shall know them," he must have meant that faith without works is dead. The meaning of *Karma* literally is "works," and the Hindus apply it not only to the operations of nature and of the great laws of nature in connection with man's reward and punishment, but also to all the different works that man can perform. St. James insists on the religion of works. He says that true religion is to visit the fatherless and the widows and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. St. Matthew says we shall be judged for every act, word, and thought. This alone is possible under the doctrine of Karma. The command of Jesus to refrain from judgment or we should ourselves be judged is a plain statement of Karma, as is, too, the rest of the verse saying that what we mete out shall be given back to us. St. Paul, following this, distinctly states the doctrine thus: "Brethren, be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap." The word "whatsoever" includes every act and thought, and permits no escape from the consequences of any act. A clearer statement of the law of Karma as applied to daily life could hardly be made. Again, going to Revelations, the last words in the Christian book, we read all through it that the last judgment proceeds on the works—in other words, on the Karma—of men. It distinctly asserts that in the vision, as well as in the messages to the Churches, judgment passes for works.

We therefore must conclude that the religion of Jesus is in complete accord with the chief doctrines of Theosophy; it is fair to assume that even the most recondite of theosophical theories would not have been opposed by him. Our discussion must have led us to the conclusion

that the religion of Karma, the practise of good works, is that in which the religion of Jesus agrees with Theosophy, and that alone thereby will arrive the longed-for day when the great ideal of Universal Brotherhood will be realized, and will furnish the common ground on which all faiths may stand and from which every nation may work for the good and the perfection of the human family.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

Paper read before

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### THEOSOPHY IN THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE

I HAVE been asked to say a few more words on the subject of Theosophy in the Christian Bible; that is, I have been asked to show what Theosophical doctrines can be found in the Christian books.<sup>1</sup>

One of the Theosophical doctrines is the doctrine of Karma; that is, exact justice ruling in the spiritual as well as in the physical; the exact carrying out of effect from cause in the spiritual nature of man, the moral nature as well as in the physical world, That is, that every man is ruled in his life, not by a vengeful and partial God, but by justice. This life is just; whether one is miserable or happy, whether he is poor or rich, it is just. Where is this doctrine found in the Christian Bible, this doctrine that as ye have sown so shall ye reap? That is, having lived before in this world you have made causes which bring about today the life you lead now, which have made the characteristics that you have, which made you what you are now, and have plunged you into a living hell or into a happy heaven today. We say this doctrine has not of late been taught in Christianity; but it is in the books of the Christians and it ought to have been taught, it would have been profitable had it been expounded. Now, where can it be found?

Does not Jesus say, among other things, you should not judge others? Why? Because if you do you will be judged yourself. What you mete out to others will be meted out to you. That is, what men do to others will be done to themselves. Where and when is this to be done? When is the measure to be meted out if not in this life or some other? St. Paul says: "Brethren, be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Do not these quotations prove that in St. Paul and in the words of Jesus can be

<sup>1</sup> An address made by Wm. Q. Judge at the parliament of Religions, World's Fair of 1893, Chicago, Illinois.

found this doctrine of Karma: that as you sow so shall you reap? That your circumstances now are the result of your own acts? This is the doctrine which is the most prominent in the Theosophical field. I call it Theosophical, not because the members teach it, nor from its presence in our literature, but because it is found in the religion of every nation; that is why it is Theosophical. But you have been taught that you must be good or you will be punished. In the West you are told you will be rewarded and punished in this life and in the next. But men are not punished in this life. Today thousands of men live lives of luxury, strife, and crime, but they are not punished here, and, according to the teachings of Christianity, they stand a pretty good chance of escaping punishment hereafter if they only believe. We see that many are not rewarded who are good, but are often born into misery.

The doctrine of reincarnation is taught in the Christian Bible, that is, that you will be born over and over again in this world according to your destiny, to follow the effects of causes you yourself have put in motion in whatever life. Where is that found? In the mouth of Jesus; and certainly if Jesus, the founder of Christianity, has stated this, has any man or any body of men, has any person any right to say that it is not true? I deny their right, and I say that Christianity has been deprived by theologians of a doctrine which Jesus himself declared, when reincarnation is taken away from it. We say that the doctrine is in the Gospels. One day they brought to Jesus a man who was born blind and asked him why was this man born blind; was it for some sin he had committed or those his parents committed? Now, how could a man be born blind for a sin he had himself committed unless he had lived before that time to commit it? This was a doctrine believed in at that day. The Jews believed it and Jesus was a Jew. He did not deny the doctrine on that occasion. He only said, "Not for that reason." If the doctrine were wrong, certainly Jesus, as the Son of God, would not only have denied it, but he would have said, "The doctrine you enunciate is false." He said nothing of the kind. At another time he himself declared the doctrine, and he asked his disciples, "Whom do men think that I am?", meaning and referring to what was believed at that time, that great sages were born over and over again for the enlightenment of mankind. They call them Avatars in the East. They had an idea great sages and prophets would come back. Will you tell me how such men then could be reborn at all unless under natural law and unless such law governs every man? So Jesus, referring to this idea, said to his

disciples: "Whom do men think that I am?" And they said: "Some men think that you are Elias, who was for to come." St. John had been killed just then by the ruler of Judea, and Jesus said to them that Elias had already come back in the person of John and the rulers had killed him, not knowing he was a reincarnation of Elias. So in one case he did not deny and in the other he explicitly asserted the doctrine. And if we take this view we know what he meant when he said to Nicodemus that a man must be born again. He meant not only the regeneration of the soul, but reborn into the body again; that is, that man is a soul who comes into a house to live life after life, and he must go from house to house until he has learned the whole architecture of human life and is able to build a perfect house. In Revelations, the last word of all the books, we find the great speaker writing that he heard the voice of God saying to him that him who overcometh the flesh and the devil, the world and sin, "I shall make a pillar in the house of my Father and he shall go out no more." Does not that mean he had gone out before? The old fathers in the early ages of Christianity taught that if we triumphed over the flesh and the devil, the world and sin, God would make each one a pillar in the house of his father and he would not have to go out again. That is the doctrine of reincarnation.

Then if you will look at the history of the Christian Church you find that the doctrine was taught for five hundred years, and not until the Council of Constantinople was it rejected. At that time it was turned out by ignorant monks, and since then it has not been taught by the teachers, but it is in the Christian books, and to these Christian books we appeal. I say these very doctrines are in many other places found there. Another doctrine is that man is not merely a body, but is a composite being of many divisions. St. Paul taught we have a spiritual body as well as a material body, that we are a spiritual body and a physical body and spirit. That will bring in every one of the seven principles of the Theosophical category. So we say, all through the Christian books, in the Old Testament and in the New, we may find the great doctrines of Theosophy, by which I mean the great universal ideas of unity, of universal brotherhood, of strict justice and no favoritism, of reincarnation, and of the composite nature of man, which permeate every religion as well as the books of the Christians, both old and new.

## JACOB BOEHME AND THE SECRET DOCTRINE

**J**ACOB Boehme (or as some say Behmen) was a German mystic and spiritualist who began to write in the 17th century. In his works he inserted a picture of an angel blowing a trumpet, from which issued these words: "To all Christians, Jews, Turks and Heathens, to all the nations of the earth this Trumpet sounds for the last time." In truth it was a curious emblem, but he, the author, was a mystic, and as all experience shows, the path of the mystic is a strange one. It is, as Job says, a path which the "vulture knoweth not." Even as a bird cleaves the eternal ether, so the mystic advances on a path not ordinarily manifest, a way which must be followed with care, because like the Great Light, which flashes forth and leaves only traces when it returns again to its centre, only indications are left for those who come after seeking the same spiritual wisdom. Yet by these "traces," for such they are called in the Kabbala, the way can be discerned, and the truth discovered.

Boehme was poor, of common birth, and totally devoid of ordinary education. He was only a shoemaker. Yet from the mind and out of the mouth of this unlettered man came mighty truths.

It would be idle to inquire into the complications of Karma which condemned him to such a life as his appeared to be. It must have been extremely curious, because though he had grasped the truth and was able to appreciate it, yet at the same time he could not give it out in its perfect form. But he performed his work, and there can be no manner of doubt about his succeeding incarnation. As Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita, he has been already or will shortly be "born into a family of wise devotees"; and thence "he will attain the

highest walk."

His life and writings furnish another proof that the great wisdom-religion—the Secret Doctrine—has never been left without a witness. Born a Christian, he nevertheless saw the esoteric truth lying under the moss and crust of centuries, and from the Christian Bible extracted for his purblind fellows those pearls which they refused to accept. But he did not get his knowledge from the Christian Scriptures only. Before his internal eye the panorama of real knowledge passed. His interior vision being open he could see the things he had learned in a former life, and at first not knowing what they were was stimulated by them to construe his only spiritual books in the esoteric fashion. His brain took cognizance of the Book before him, but his spirit aided by his past, and perchance by the living guardians of the shining lamp of truth, could not but read them aright.

His work was called "The Dawning of the Eternal Day." In this he endeavors to outline the great philosophy. He narrates the circumstances and reasons for the angelic creation, the fall of its chief three hierarchies, and the awful effects which thereupon fell upon Eternal Nature. Mark this, not upon man—for he was not yet—but upon the eternal Nature, that is BRAHM. Then he says that these effects came about by reason of the *unbalancing* of the *seven equipoised powers* or forces of the Eternal Nature or Brahm. That is to say, that so long as the seven principles of Brahm were in perfect poise, there was no corporeal or manifested universe. So in the Bhagavad-Gita we find that Krishna tells Arjuna that "after the lapse of a thousand ages (or Night of Brahm) all objects of developed matter come forth from the non-developed principle. At the approach of that day they emanate spontaneously." (Bhagavad-Gita, Chap. 8.) Such is the teaching of the Secret Doctrine.

And again Boehme shows the duality of the Supreme Soul. For he says in his work "Psychologia Vera cum Supplemento" that these two eternal principles of positive and negative, the *yea* and the *nay* of the outspeaking *Supreme One*, together constitute eternal nature,—not the dark world alone, which is termed the "root of nature,—" the two being as it were combined in *perfect indissoluble union*.

This is nothing else but Purush and Prakriti, or taken together, what is referred to in the Bhagavad-Gita where it is said: “But there is another invisible, eternal existence, superior to this visible one, which does not perish when all things perish. It is called invisible and indivisible. This is my Supreme Abode.”

Clearly the *Supreme Abode* could never be in Purush alone, nor in Prakriti alone, but in both when *indissolubly united*.

This scheme is adhered to all through this great philosopher’s works, no matter whether he is speaking of the great Universe or macrocosm, or of its antitype in man or microcosm. In “De Tribus Principiis” he treats of the three principles or worlds of Nature, describing its eternal birth, its *seven* properties, and the *two* co-eternal principles; and furthermore in “De Triplici Vita Hominis” he gives the threefold life of man from which the *seven* is again deduced.

In “De Electione Gratia” he goes into a subject that often proves a stumbling block to many, and that is the *inevitable-ness of evil* as well as of good. From this it is easy to pass to a contemplation of one of the difficult points in occultism as shown in the Secret Doctrine, that nothing is evil, and that even if we admit evil or wickedness in man, it is of the nature of the quality or guna, which in the Bhagavad-Gita is denominated raja—foulness or bad action. Even this is better than the indifferent action that only leads to death. Even from wickedness may and does come forth spiritual life, but from indifferent action comes only darkness, and finally death.

Krishna says in Bhagavad-Gita, Chap. IV: “There are three kinds of action; first, that which is of the nature of *Satyam*, or true action; second, that which is of the nature of *Raja*, or bad action; third, that which is of the nature of *Tamas*, or indifferent action.” He then says: “Although thou wert the greatest of all offenders, thou shalt be able to cross the gulf of sin in the bark of spiritual wisdom”; and a little farther on “The ignorant and the man without faith, whose spirit is full of doubt, is lost and cannot enjoy either world.” And in another chapter in describing Himself, he says that he is not only the Buddha, but also is the most evil of mankind or the Asura.

This is one of the most mystical parts of the whole secret doctrine. While Boehme has touched on it sufficiently to show that he had a memory of it, he did not go into the most occult details. It has to be remembered that the Bhagavad-Gita, and many other books treating on the Secret Doctrine, must be regarded from seven points of view; and that imperfect man is not able to look at it from the centre, which would give the whole seven points at once.

Boehme wrote about thirty different treatises, all of them devoted to great subjects, portions of the Secret Doctrine.

Curiously enough the first treated of the “Dawn of the Eternal Day,” and the second was devoted to an elucidation of “The Three Principles of Man.” In the latter is really to be found a sevenfold classification similar to that which Mr. Sinnett propounded in “Esoteric Buddhism.”

He held that the greatest obstacle in the path of man is the astral or elementary power, which engenders and sustains this world.

Then he talks of “tinctures,” which we may call principles. According to him there are two principal ones, the watery, and the igneous. These ought to be united in Man; and they ardently seek each other continually, in order to be identified with Sophia or Divine Wisdom. Many Theosophists will see in this a clue not only to the two principles—or tinctures — which ought to be united in man, but also to a law which obtains in many of the phenomena of magic. But even if I were able, I should not speak on this more clearly.

For many inquirers the greatest interest in these works will be found in his hypothesis as to the birth of the material Universe. On the evolution of man from spirit into matter he has much more than I could hope to glance at. In nearly all of it he was outlining and illustrating the Secret Doctrine. The books indicated are well worthy of study not only by Western but also by Eastern metaphysicians.

Let us add a few sentences to support this hypothesis from Count Saint Martin, who was a devoted student of these works.

“Jacob Boehme took for granted the existence of an Universal Principle; he was persuaded that everything is connected in the

immense chain of truths, and that the Eternal Nature reposed on seven principles or bases, which he sometimes calls powers, forms, spiritual wheels, sources, and fountains, and that those seven bases exist also in this disordered material nature, under constraint. His nomenclature, adopted for these fundamental relations, ran thus: The first *astringency*, the second *gall* or bitterness, the third *anguish*, the fourth *fire*, the fifth *light*, the sixth *sound*, and the seventh he called BEING or the *thing itself*.”

The reader may have begun to think the author did not rightly comprehend the first six but his definition of the seventh shows he was right throughout, and we may conclude the real meanings are concealed under these names.

“The third principle, *anguish*, attenuates the *astringent* one, turns it into *water*, and allows a passage to *fire*, which was shut up in the astringent principle.”

There are in this many suggestions and a pursuit of them will repay the student.

“Now the Divine Sophia caused a new order to take birth in the centre of our system, and there burned our sun; from that do come forth all kinds of qualities, forms and powers. This centre is the Separator.” It is well known that from the sun was taken by the ancients all kinds of power; and if we mistake not, the Hindus claim that when the Fathers enter into Para-Nirvana, their accumulated goodness pours itself out on the world through the “*Door of the Sun*.”

The Bhagavad-Gita says, that the Lord of all dwells in the region of the heart, and again that this Lord is also the Sun of the world.

“The earth is a condensation of the seven primordial principles, and by the withdrawal of eternal light this became a dark valley.” It is taught in the East, that this world is a valley and that we are in it, our bodies reaching to the moon, being condensed to hardness at the point where we are on the earth, thus becoming visible to the eye of man. There is a mystery in this statement, but not such an one as cannot be unravelled.

Boehme proceeds: “When the light mastered the fire at the place of the sun, the terrible shock of the battle engendered an igneous

eruption by which there shot forth from the sun a stormy and frightful flash of fire—Mars. Taken captive by light it assumed a place, and there it struggles furiously, a pricking goad, whose office is to agitate all nature, producing reaction. It is the gall of nature. The gracious, amiable Light, having enchained unerupted Mars, proceeded by its own power to the bottom or end of the rigidity of Nature, whence unable to proceed further it stopped, and became corporeal; remaining there it warms that place, and although a valet in Nature, it is the source of sweetness and the moderator of Mars.

“Saturn does not originate from the sun, but was produced from the severe astringent anguish of the whole body of this Universe. Above Jupiter the sun could not mitigate the horror, and out of that arose Saturn, who is the opposite of meekness, and who produces whatever of rigidity there is in creatures, including bones, and what in moral nature corresponds thereto.” (This is all the highest astrology, from one who had no knowledge of it.) “As in the Sun is *the heart of life*, so by Saturn commenceth all corporeal nature. Thus in these two resides the power of the whole universal body, and without their power there could be no creation nor any corporification.

“Venus originates in *effluvia* from the Sun. She lights the unctuousness of the water of the Universe, penetrates hardness, and enkindles love.

“Mercury is the chief worker in the planetary wheel; he is *sound*, and wakes up the germs in everything. His origin, the triumph of Light over Astringency (in which sound was shut up silent), set free the sound by the attenuation of the astringent power.”

It is certain that if this peculiar statement regarding Mercury is understood, the student will have gained a high point of knowledge. A seductive bait is here held out to those striving disciples who so earnestly desire to hold converse with the elemental world. But there is no danger, for all the avenues are very secret and only the pure can prevail in the preliminary steps.

Boehme says again: “The Mercury is impregnated and fed continually by the solar substance; that in it is found the knowledge of what was in the order above, before Light had penetrated to the solar centre.”

As to the Moon, it is curious to note that he says, “she was produced from the sun itself, at the time of his becoming material, and that the moon is his spouse.” Students of the story of Adam being made to sleep after his creation and before coats of skin were given, when Eve was produced from his side, will find in this a strong hint.

The above is not by any means a complete statement of Boehme’s system. In order to do justice to it, a full analysis of all his works should be undertaken. However, it is sufficient if thoughtful minds who have not read Boehme, shall turn to him after reading this, or if but one earnest reader of his works, or seeker after wisdom, shall receive even a hint that may lead to a clearing up of doubts, or to the acquisition of one new idea. Count Saint Martin continually read him; and the merest glance at the “Theosophic Correspondence” or, “Man—His Nature, &c,” of Saint Martin, will show that from that study he learned much. How much more then will the Western mind be aided by the light shed on both by the lamp of Theosophical teachings.

“Let the desire of the pious be fulfilled.”

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

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## A BUDDHIST DOCTRINE

**T**HERE are twelve principal Buddhist sects in Japan. These are: Ku-Sha-Shiu, Jo-Jitsu-Shiu, Ris-Shiu, Ho-so-Shiu, San Ron-Shiu, Ke-Gon-Shiu, Ten-Dai-Shiu, Shin-Gon-Shiu, Jo-Do-Shiu, Zen-Shiu, Shin-Shiu, and Nichi-Ren-Shiu. It is of a tenet of the Shin-Shiu that I propose to speak. The student can learn much of the others by consulting the works of Mr. Bunyiu Nanjio, M.A., and other authorities.

The last four of those mentioned may be called the modern ones. Gen-Ku founded the Jo-Do in 1174 A.D.; the Zen-Shiu was started by Ei-Sai in 1191 A.D.; the Shin-Shiu was founded in 1224 A.D. by Shin-Ran; and in 1253 A.D., Nichi-Ren established that one named for him. This last is more frequently called by the founder’s name because, although he adopted what is called the Saddharmapundarika as the principal Sutra of it, he altered the substance of the doctrine. For that reason it is called, paraphrastically, “Nichi-Ren’s Saddharmapundarika sect.”

The essential difference between the Shin-Shiu and the others may be seen by placing its doctrine and that of the Zen-Shiu side by side. In the latter the disciple is to see the nature of Buddha by his own thought, free from the influence of the eighty-four thousand different doctrines, while the Shin-Shiu teaches that we attain salvation “*by the power of another,*” who is Amita Buddha.

The Zen-Shiu is said to have originated from the incident, well known to Buddhists, of Gotama Buddha’s taking from the heavenly king a flower of golden color and holding it in his hand in silence. The disciples could not understand the meaning of this, except

Mahakasyapa, who, although he knew, only smiled and remained also silent. Thereupon Buddha said to him, "I have the wonderful thought of Nirvana." This was called "the doctrine of thought transmitted by thought." An-anda received it from Kasyapa, and so on down a long list of patriarchs in the church. The twenty-eighth patriarch, Bodhidharma, a king's son, crossed over into China. In that country he attempted to teach the Emperor the secret of the doctrine, but the pupil could not understand it, and Bodhidharma entered a monastery where he pursued the practice of sitting in meditation gazing at a wall for nine years, after which he gained disciples. He was called "the wall-gazing Brahmana." A later devotee in 729 A.D. came from China to Japan and established a form of the doctrine of Zen-Shiu. In this school, as distinguished from the Shin-Shiu, the disciple exercises his own thought independent of doctrine, while in the latter a doctrine is relied upon. The words of the Indian poem Bhagavad-Gita may be profitably remembered here, where it says that "he who pursues the unmanifested path has a more difficult task [than any other] to perform."<sup>1</sup>

The other sects, except the Shin-Shiu, have various doctrines for the attainment of the end in view, but the followers of the Shin-Shiu declare that all these are "expedients." They do not exclude the Zen-Shiu, although it would appear perhaps to the aggressive mind of the Englishman or American that to tell a man he can attain Nirvana by his own power is not laying a mere expedient before him.

It is because of these doctrines of expediency in other sects that the Shin-Shiu call themselves "the True Sect of Buddhists."

The doctrine of the sect is also called by them "the Doctrine of the Pure Land." The pure land referred to is the Land of Amida Buddha [Amitabha]: the object is to be born into that land, that is, to obtain salvation. It has been otherwise stated in this manner:

"Among those who follow the doctrine of the Pure Land, there are several different systems of teaching, which are as follows:— 'Some say that we should practise various good works, bring our

stock of merits to maturity, and be born in the Pure Land. Others say that we should repeat only the name of Amitabha Buddha in order to be born in his Pure Land, by the merit produced from such repetition.' These doctrines are all considered as yet the temporary expedients. To rely upon the power of the original prayer of Amitabha Buddha with the whole heart and give up all idea of Ji-Riki or 'self-power' is called the truth. This truth is the doctrine of this sect."<sup>2</sup>

The eighteenth of the forty-eight prayers of Amita Buddha is the prayer referred to. It is: "if any of living beings of the ten regions who have believed in me with true thoughts and desire to be born in my country, and have even to ten times repeated the thought of my name, should not be born there, then may I not obtain the perfect knowledge." This prayer was made by him because of his great desire to deliver all beings from suffering. It was a prayer which he first uttered long before he himself obtained salvation, but he continued for ages after that to work to the end that he might be able to make the prayer of force and value to any one who should use it. It follows, of course, that he accomplished his desire, and the Shin-Shiu sect accordingly claims that this prayer or vow has a peculiar effect of its own, and has strength to enable whoever uses it to reach salvation.

The claims made for this prayer are in accordance with certain views that are held in the East about the force that resides in the vows of a wise or great saint. They are said to have an actual dynamic effect upon the minds and hearts of all persons who shall use them, even after the saint has died. It is claimed that the power has to do with magnetism. And it is said by the followers of Shin-Shiu that, when one begins to repeat and rely upon the prayer of Amita Buddha, he at once connects himself with the whole body of real believers, and as well with the power of Amita himself.

In its essence the doctrine is one of salvation by faith, but at the same time the sect does not claim—as the Christian does for his dogma—that there is no other way to be saved. They admit that a person may be saved "by his own power"—if he has the requisite

<sup>1</sup>See Bhagavad-Gita.--[Ed.]

<sup>2</sup>12 Japanese Buddhist Sects, by Bunyiu Nanjio.

strength to hold out—, but they think that in general men have not the power to resist evil for a time sufficient to permit the accomplishment of the result; and they assert that besides the lack of strength there will be doubt, for, “Faith by one’s own power cannot afford rest to the heart. It is said, ‘Shall I surely attain salvation or shall I not?’ and thus what is called faith is in reality doubt,” but “Faith by the power of another affords rest to the heart. It is said—: ‘I am born by the power of that vow; I shall certainly attain salvation.’ There is not the smallest doubt in the heart.” Another Sutra says: “Those who follow the method of ‘self power’ believe in many other Buddhas; those who follow the method of ‘another’s power’ believe only in the one Buddha, as a faithful servant does not serve two masters.”

In a compilation made by direction of the Eastern Hong-wanji of Japan it is said “The appellations ‘true’ and ‘popular’ are an important matter. Our sect terms the attaining of the rest of the heart the True System; the observation of the relations of life the Popular System. Our sect has granted the permission to marry. Hence the five relations of life necessarily exist. Where the five relations of life exist, the duties involved in them must be observed. This is termed ‘the popular system.’

“It is said in the Sutra : ‘*The living beings in the ten regions, be they householders or houseless.*’. . . Shall the holy path be different for them? Although the sins of the unenlightened be many, if these are contrasted with the power of the vow they are not as the millet seed to the ocean. . . . The sins of the unenlightened are heavy; if you precipitate them on the three worlds they inevitably sink; but if you place them on the ship of the Vow they assuredly become light. The merit of living beings is full of teaks. Mida’s land of reward has no leaks. With the merit which is full of leaks you cannot be born into the land where there are no leaks.”

From a later part of the same compilation:—“Our Founder said: ‘*brothers within the four seas.*’ Faith by the power of another proceeds from Mida. Thus Mida is father and mother; all within the four seas are brothers. The Chinese call foreigners barbarians; foreigners call China uncivilized. Both, we consider, are wrong. Those

who do not observe the relations of life are the barbarians, without distinction of ‘home’ or ‘foreign.’ Throughout all that the heaven covers, wherever sun and moon shine, what is there that we shall call barbarian or uncivilized? When the heart is wide as heaven and earth, the discourse clear as sun and moon, then first is attained the equitable and just. Between heaven and earth there is no one to be disassociated, no spot not to be reached. The kindly relations of intercourse make the friend; two persons the same mind; their spirit is as disseparated gold. One country the same mind; as a golden bowl without defect. All countries the same mind; then first is attained the perfect equitability. The foundation of the same mind is the calling to remembrance of the one Buddha.”. . .

“Zendo has said: ‘We are truly like this: unenlightened we are subject to the evil of birth and death; for long Kalpas we revolve, sinking and floating in the sea of existence; there seems no cause of escape.’. . . But He, Amida Buddha, long kalpas ago putting forth a heart of great compassion, planning through five kalpas, having accomplished the long kalpas, *perfected his vow.*”

Hence we find the sect without spells or supplications for the avoiding of trouble. They hold that the trouble and misery of our life are due to causes originated either in long past existence or in the present incarnation. These last are to be carefully avoided, and the “popular system” gives the various rules to follow. But the causes that lie rooted in prior incarnations cannot be provided for in any way. This stored-up Karma it is useless to regret or try to avoid. It will have its course. But we must submit cheerfully, knowing that, by relying on the power of Buddha’s sublime vow and by joining right practice to it, in time all Karma, good and bad, will be exhausted. Hence there are no spells, talismans, or supplications used by the Shin-Shiu. All its followers must follow and imitate the Buddha in his great love and compassion, and they hold that, if this were the practice in every part of the world, harmony would prevail and prosperity come to all with peace and joy.

EUSEBIO URBAN

## REGARDING ISLAMISM

**T**HE conversion to the religion of the Prophet Mohammed of Alexander Russell Webb, F.T.S., and his establishing in New York a paper devoted to Islamism, together with his lectures on the subject, have caused a great deal of attention to be given to Mohammedanism. Bro. Webb is still a member of the Society, with an interest in its progress, and this is another illustration of the broadness of our platform. But he says that it has surprised him to find the members in general paying slight regard to the life of the Prophet, his sayings and his religion, as one of our objects calls for the study of all religions. In India he found many followers of the Prophet in our Branches, and among them much knowledge of formerly so-called esoteric doctrines, which are common to all religions. That such would be the case must have long ago been evident to those who have read the admirable articles which were printed some years ago in the *PATH* upon Sufi poetry, as the Sufis really preserve the inner doctrines of Islam. But it is natural that the religion of Mohammed has not received from Western people very great consideration. They judge it in the mass, and not from some of its teachings. The West has developed its social system and its religious belief on its own lines, and having seen that many of the followers of the Prophet are polygamists, which is contrary to Western notions, the entire Islamic system has been condemned on that ground, both in a social and religious sense.

The best Mohammedans say that the Prophet did not teach polygamy, but only permitted it in case a man could treat many wives in exactly the same way in every respect that he could one.

Although over against this the Prophet himself had but one wife, and was in fact a celibate, it was quite natural that his followers should liberally construe what he said on the subject and take unto themselves as many wives as their means permitted. This is human nature, and would probably be the result today in the West if our people placed reliance on the words of a Teacher who had made a similar statement.

The words of the Koran upon the subject of polygamy, as given by Mr. Webb, are:

And if ye are apprehensive that ye shall not deal fairly with orphans, then of other women who seem good in your eyes, marry but two, or three, or four; if ye still fear that ye shall not act equitably, then one only.—  
*Koran, Sura IV, verse 3.*

The next prominent conception held by Western people about the Mohammedans is that they have forced an acceptance of their doctrines. We have such stories as that they carried sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, compelling people to accept the book under threat of the sword; that they burned books containing matter other than that in the Koran, on the ground that if it was in the Koran the books were unnecessary, and if it was not in the Koran the books were wrong and should be burned. But the disciples of the Prophet assert that he never taught any such thing, and point to much learning on the part of the Mohammedans in the past. Doubtless these disciples are right, but we know that many Mohammedans tried to coerce people, and that there is some foundation for the story in respect to destruction of that which was not found in the Koran. For these reasons the West has been opposed to Islamism without really knowing much about it. The religion has been judged by the proceedings of its followers. Similar charges might be made against Christian peoples, who notoriously both individually and as nations are in the habit of going directly contrary to the commands of their Founder.

A student of these subjects, then, comes to consider lastly the claims of Islamism on philosophical and religious grounds, and naturally asks the question whether it has any better philosophy than any other religion, and if its religion is supported by a correct philosophy. If it be found that the truths given out by the Prophet were known and written

down before his time, then why should the Western student turn to the later religion, the product of a more or less undeveloped people, when he may go to the original from which it undoubtedly came? And if in that original we can find broader and more definite expositions of cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, we may very properly use Islamism to illustrate the Theosophic truism that one single truth is the basis upon which all religions stand, but we are not necessarily obliged to adopt it to the exclusion of anything else.

Islamism seems to many to exact a belief in *a* God, and the conception of *a* God demands that that being shall be separate from those who believe in him. This view does not appeal to many Western Theosophists, because they assert that there can be no God different or separate from man. In the *Rig Veda* of the Brahmans there are as grand, and some think grander, conceptions of God and nature, as can be found in any Islamic book. If the two are equal in this regard, then the *Rig Veda*, being admittedly the elder, must have the first place by reason of age; but if the *Rig Veda* and the philosophy growing out of it are broader and grander than the other, then for that reason it must be more acceptable.

The five fundamental precepts of Islam are given in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, as follows:

*First*, Confession of the Unity of God; *second*, stated prayer; *third*, almsgiving; *fourth*, the fast of Ramadan; *fifth*, observance of the festival of Mecca.

In the latest English publication on the subject, Mr. Webb says:

Orthodox Mohammedanism may be divided into six heads: *First*, faith in God, the one God, the creator of all things, who always was and ever will be, the single, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, all-merciful, eternal God; *second*, faith in angels, ethereal beings perfect in form and radiant in beauty, without sex, free from all gross or sensual passion and the appetites and infirmities of all frail humanity; *third*, belief in the Koran as a book of Divine revelation, given at various times to Mohammed by God or through the Angel Gabriel; *fourth*, belief in God's prophets, the most preeminent of whom were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed; *fifth*, belief in the resurrection and final judgment, when all mankind shall appear before God, who will reward or punish them according to the deeds they have done on earth; *sixth*, belief in predestination, or the inability of man to

avoid, by any act of his own, the destiny irrevocably predetermined by God and written down in the eternal book previous to the creation of the world.

The religion of the Prophet contains, in common with all other religions, a secret doctrine which is the same as that found in those differently named. As referred to above, the Sufis taught a very high kind of mysticism, but not any higher than that of the Hindus, nor any different from the mysticism of the Christians, both of early and later times. They taught union with God; so do the Hindu and the Christian. They spoke of their wife and their mistress and their concubines or houris; so do mediaeval alchemists, and many of the Indian Yogis speak in a similar strain; so that in whatever direction we turn it is found that there is no substantial difference between Islamism and any other religion except in respect to age, and it is really the youngest of all, excepting perhaps the later Christian development found among the Mormons of America or Latter-day Saints. In fact, some Western Theosophists have said that it would be just as well to accept Mormonism as Islamism, since the teachings are identical and the practices are also. The Mormons say that polygamy is not taught, but they practice it; they have their mysticism, their prophecy, their various kinds of frenzy, and among them are many extraordinary examples of prevision, notably with Brigham Young, the second prophet.

Americans might be inclined, if they were about to make a change, to accept their own natural product in preference to an Arabian one. Certainly in regard to morality, honesty, thrift, temperance, and such virtues, the Mormons stand as well as the followers of the Prophet Mohammed. But as we know little about true Islamism, a careful consideration of it will no doubt add to our knowledge and broaden our conceptions, since it must end in our seeing once more that none of the religions of the day are true ones, but that a single body of truth underlying them all must be the religion of the future.

HADJI ERINN

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